



Testimony of Ryan Lynch, senior planner and Connecticut coordinator  
Tri-State Transportation Campaign

Connecticut Legislature—Joint Committee on Transportation  
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### **An Act Concerning the Establishment of Electronic Tolls at the State's Border's**

My name is Ryan Lynch, and I am the senior planner and Connecticut coordinator for the Tri-State Transportation Campaign, a non-profit organization working towards a more balanced, transit-friendly and socially-equitable transportation system in CT, NY and NJ.

Tri-State is an ardent supporter of tolling and pricing as methods to generate revenue for transit and transportation infrastructure and reduce congestion on Connecticut's roads. We feel that these congestion mitigation and revenue generation measures are the future of traffic demand management and transportation finance.

And even though that the State Transportation Fund is set to run a deficit by the end of this year and congestion on the state's roads causes the economy to lose nearly \$500 million a year from excess fuel consumption, loss of productivity and delays, we oppose the Raised Bill 5474 as written today.

While we applaud the Transportation Committee's continued willingness to consider tolling as means of generating revenue for the State's transportation coffers, tolls along Connecticut's borders face several problems. First they are inequitable, putting the burden of financing transportation solely on Connecticut's citizens who live along the border. Second, border tolls is an ineffective way to reduce congestion in the state, an equally important goal that must be considered when implementing tolls, by failing to manage traffic demand and leaving the State's remaining highways un-priced.

We recognize that something must be done to address the transportation deficit and continued congestion facing Connecticut. New and innovative funding mechanisms need to be considered as a way to generate enough resources to fund a 21<sup>st</sup> century, multi-modal, transportation system. Congestion pricing in the I-95 corridor, dynamic tolling of all the State's limited access highways and conversion of HOV lanes on I-91 and I-84 into High Occupancy Tolling lanes, are just three possibilities that should be at the forefront of consideration.

These ideas are worthwhile and can be fine tuned through thoughtful legislation that addresses the need for balance in the State. For example, any legislation concerning the proposal to implement congestion pricing along the congested I-95 and Route 15 corridor should dedicate funds generated to maintaining the existing road and bridge infrastructure of this heavily traveled corridor. Doing so could possibly free up state funds to expand the transit network, promoting transit oriented development

around rail and bus stations, invest in bike and pedestrian infrastructure and support shuttle routes to facilitate getting more riders on trains.

Dynamic tolling, much like congestion pricing, along all of the state's limited access highways could encourage drivers to shift unnecessary trips to off-peak hours and ease the congestion along the State's highways.

HOV to HOT lanes conversion would provide driving choice while reducing congestion and generating revenue.

Whatever you decide, please remember that our population is growing; yet funding for our transportation network through state and federal gas taxes is diminishing.

Border tolling is not the answer to Connecticut's transportation problems. As I've outlined above, we are not without other options, however. These options would offer more balanced and effective ways to raise revenue and reduce congestion. However we must act with urgency. If we delay implementation on these options, the transportation deficit will grow and the costs of congestion on our roads will get larger, further hurting our economy, environment and quality of life.

Tri-State urges the Transportation Committee to oppose HB 5474 but support an amended bill which would implement other pricing and tolling measures throughout the State.

Thank you, and I am happy to answer any questions you may have.